

DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, March 19, 2007 - 5:00 p.m.
Room 402 - Fourth Floor, City Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Robert Powless, Donna Ennis, Warner Wirta, Tony LaDeaux, John Day, Joy Dorscher, Brian Wilson, Ricky DeFoe, Beatrice Kitto, Mike Sayers

EXCUSED ABSENT: Michele Gordon

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: John Judd

OTHERS PRESENT: See sign-in sheet

CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Motion by Dr. Powless, seconded by John Day, to approve the agenda with the addition under New Business of C. Upcoming Community Powwow. The motion was unanimously approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 20, 2007 MEETING:

Two changes: Dr. Powless said he recommended to the Johnson Control Study have a cultural diversity room in every school. Mike Sayers said his absence last month was excused.

Motion by John Day, seconded by Dr. Powless, to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2007, meeting with the noted changes. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMUNITY PUBLIC FORUM / OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

St. Louis County Attorney, Melanie Ford - Ford would like to diversify the County Attorney's office as the opportunity arises. Wirta asked about training for her staff. She will have mandatory cultural diversity training for her staff. If Commissioners have suggestions regarding specific training, she is open to it. Day congratulated Ford on her elected position. He would like to sit down with her to present a curriculum that is non-threatening. Defoe said the last County Attorney seemed to discourage new recruits of color. He asked what Ford would do to recruit people of color. She said she is posting positions in communities of color. LaDeaux wants to explore programs that promote positive change in undoing racism. Ford was receptive to this.

Wirta would like to see the City and County work together to explore unsolved crimes against Indians. He is tired of walking the streets in fear. Ford said that the County

doesn't do much investigating but will work closely with the police department. Wirta feels there is a disparity between Indian and Caucasian investigations and prosecutions.

Defoe is questioning the "proof" regarding crimes as it relates to Indian people. It appears as if there is enough proof but the investigations go no further. Kitto believes that Native women who are victims of violent crimes are not well represented. Greg Price complained about being stalked in Carlton County and not getting a response. Ford does not have jurisdiction. Defoe talked about silent oppression. Wirta asked about Ford's thoughts on Citizen Review Board. Ford has attended some informational meetings and will give it more thought. Blair Powless would recommend "Undoing Racism" program by People's Institute North.

American Cancer Society, Marjorie Johnson - Marjorie Johnson works with Tribal Communities. There is a high incidence of Cancer in Native communities. Cancer screening is improving and resources are being developed to increase it even more. Johnson discussed various programs available through American Cancer Society. Dr. Powless suggested that we could get involved somehow in helping lower transportation barriers to people getting to screenings.

OLD BUSINESS:

Report on the Indian Center / Housing Project - Sherry Sanchez-Tibbetts wasn't able to attend.

Review and approval of DAIC 2007 Work Plan and Calendar –

Motion by Dr. Powless, seconded by Tony LaDeaux, to approve DAIC 2007 Work Plan. The motion was unanimously approved.

Report on projects funded by the Duluth Housing Investment Fund (DHIF) - John Judd reported on projects funded by DHIF. Various Commissioners expressed frustration regarding supporting housing projects/programs that present themselves as providing affordable housing for American Indians and then in the end they are not affordable to them and the units go to others. The DAIC needs to hold firm on the \$600,000 allocated exclusively for the AICHO, YWCA building Indian Housing Project

Letter to the Congress of American Indians regarding the dumping of barrels of toxic material into Lake Superior - Greg Price suggested DAIC use a similar letter like the one endorsed by Mike Jaros, from the House of Representatives, but on our letterhead. Judd will have the City Attorney's office review it and bring a draft to the next DAIC meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion of Judge Luna-Firebaugh's workshops - LaDeaux said the workshop was well received. There is a meeting at YWCA tomorrow (3/20) at 5:00 regarding Citizen's Review Board.

St. Louis County, 10-year Plan to End Homelessness, Summary - Steve O'Neil is looking for endorsement for the County's four broad goals.

Motion made by John Day, seconded by Mike Sayers, to have a letter drafted by the co-chairs supporting the County's plan. The motion was unanimously approved.

Community Powwow - A graduate student from U.M.D. is working on a project that would bring a community-wide powwow to the area for students as a stepping stone to increase the local Indian student retention rate. She is asking for the DAIC support.

Motion by Dr. Powless, seconded by Mike Sayers, that a letter of support be written by the co-chairs. The motion was unanimously approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPCOMING EVENTS & COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Dr. Powless – Thought it was a good meeting.

Brian Wilson – PAVSA fundraiser (Take back the Night) is in process. A request of \$100 from the Commission is being requested. Judd will investigate if this can happen.

Motion by John Day, seconded by Dr. Powless, to donate \$100 and be a community sponsor for the event. The motion was unanimously approved.

Rickey Defoe - The climate in Indian Country is very positive regarding the work of the DAIC .

Bea Kitto – Questions the Mayor's commitment to improving housing.

Warner Wirta – “Invisible Wounds of Oppression” at UMD was a good workshop. He recommended the book “American Indian Contributions to the World.”

Tony LaDeaux – Will introduce “Aztec Circles” program to ISD 709. He likes the changes he is seeing in Indian Country.

Mike Sayers – There is a housing meeting tomorrow.

John Day – Talked about his experience of being unemployed in the eighties.

Donna Ennis – A Community Forum and Healing Ceremony was held last Saturday. It went very well.

Dr. Joy Dorscher – Thank you to Tony LaDeaux and Ricky Defoe - Judge Luna-FireBaugh's workshops.

NEXT MEETING/DATE/LOCATION:

April 16, 2007, at 5:00p.m. in room 402 City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT:

8:30 p.m.